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Pennville

By IDA HELEN MCCARTY

Pennville, an isolated farmer's town ten miles from nearest railroad, is located on a high bluff on the east bank of the Salimonia river. It is justly proud of its sturdy Hicksite Quaker founders, the Samuel Grisell family, and of the heritage left the town by the colony of talented Quakers that came in to people the new settlement. Pennville is in remembrance of William Penn. Since its origin, in 1836, a desire for learning has characterized the citizens of Pennville. The early families were from Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and Ohio.

In 1837 the first school was "kept" by Levi Johnson, in the log Hicksite church which stood on the knoll, later occupied by the white Quaker church, and today by the Arnold and Engler grain elevator. Across the road from this knoll is the old Hicksite Quaker burying-ground.

One year after the opening of this Quaker school the enterprising Methodists founded a church in the new town—a church destined to do great things for the town and for the country at large. In a few years men and women from the settlement were making themselves heard in church and school affairs, lodge work and even in the administration of business in the capitol. Isaac Underwood's name stands out prominently in this last. Many times he held the offices of representative and senator from this district. The bill making possible the Belt Line railroad at Indianapolis was introduced by him.

Pennville's second school was a log town where now stands the residence of Lee Gible. Hiram Gregg is best remembered of all the teachers of this school. Later he became a noted nurseryman, and it was he who planted the trees along the long lane leading up to the Penn township school of today; also the evergreens and the fruit orchard of the present school campus, and the great apple orchard now owned by his son Warren Gregg, west of the school building. But the third school, the white frame building that stood in the center of the town, was the foundation on which rests all later history of the place.

Living throughout Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois and other western states are white-haired men and women, once urchins in this old frame school. Not one of these but remembers the home village of Pennville (sometimes called "Camden" in those days) with a pride and a love bordering on reverence, and it is a fact that nearly all of these old-time citizens, when dead, will be brought back home for burial.

Among the old Pedagogues who rang the hand bell here and (perhaps) wielded the hickory gad are: Nelson Sawyer, Sherman McDaniel, Josiah V. Jones and his wife Elmira B. Jones, Joseph Boyd, William Hiatt, Rebecca Boles, Decatur Barr, Margaret Grisell, Sarah Janny Bailey and Elizabeth McCoy. The four last named teachers are still living in Pennville. All of them are active citizens, full of hears and full of honors.

In 1872 a two-story brick building replaced the white frame school. At that time this was considered a fine structure. For thirty-nine years it was the glory of the town.

Today, living throughout the United States, are men noted in every honorable profession who, as boys, used to slide down the balusters of this school, do their sums on the blackboards and play baseball and recess games in the great, shady campus.

This school operated from 1872 till 1894 without a commissioned high school, although many high school subjects were taught. Students wishing to obtain higher education in those days attended business schools at Richmond, Ft. Wayne, Muncie and Indianapolis. Dozens of them went to Valparaiso college, Holbrook Normal, Lebanon, Ohio. Occasionally a few went to the University of Michigan, Indiana university or Earlham college.

The list of teachers of this famous school is a noble one; many of them still reside in Pennville; a great many of them live in other Indiana towns. What the pupils of this school did and what they passed on to the younger scholars is the basis of this article.

For the excellency of the work done here, much credit must be given the superintendents who labored so long to obtain a commission. Many of them have since won fame and fortune in various walks of life. They are: Tom Acre, Will Sibray (now Commissioner of Immigration, Pittsburg, Pa.), Jimmie Ferris (who became a noted preached of the North In-

diana Methodist conference and later a missionary to Africa), L. C. Chamberlain, John Jan (a prominent insurance man at Fortville, Indiana), Daniel Boyd and Trueman Boyd (the latter a physician and the founder of the Twin Falls city hospital, Twin Falls, Idaho).

The first graduating class of the new commissioned high school in 1894 consisted of five members: Edward E. Emmons (now of Portland, Indiana), O. O. Emmons (of Tonopah, Nevada), Ashley Cash (of Hoodriver, Oregon), Vannie Walton (of Kenty, Oregon), and Charles Underwood, son of Isaac Underwood mentioned above.

Charles Underwood completed the course at Butler college and then took post-graduate work at Yale, holding two degrees from each university. He was ordained minister of the Church of Christ and later accepted the chair of Sacred History at Butler college, which position he held until his death a few years ago. As the Pied Piper's melody led the children of Hamelin, so this thirst for knowledge kept drawing the youth of Pennville to business school, to normal and to university. The perseverance and the success of Charles Underwood intensified the ambition of his comrades in the "old red brick" schoolhouse.

The very remarkable statement concerning this little village is authentic, coming as it does from the records of Indiana university: Pennville, Indiana, sends more students to schools of higher learning than any other town of its size and population in the states of Indiana or Michigan. Students from this town have registered in West Point, Yale, Columbia, Boston Theological, State Normal of Virginia, Carnegie Tech., Swarthmore, Ohio State university, Wooster, Oberlin, the Western, the Schuster-Martin school of dramatic art, Cincinnati, O., Oxford for Women, Cincinnati university, Ada university, University of Michigan, Earlham, DePauw, Purdue, Hanover, Taylor university, Indiana university, Chicago university, Northwestern, University of Illinois, Monmouth college, University of Wisconsin, University of Colorado, University of Denver, University of California, Idaho university, Lincoln Memorial university and the academies of Culver and Sweetwater, Tennessee.

In 1911 the old red brick was torn down and many loads of its material found themselves "linked with a new race, a

new age," as Kipling would say, in the modern Penn township school on Hiram Griggs hill, in the western part of town. Here, from the laboratory window, one may gaze eastward across the town and see the rise of ground where once stood the first log meeting school nearly 87 years ago. What a volume of history is folded back in those intervening years.

The present school is not strictly consolidated, there being four rural schools in Penn township. Eighty children are transported to Pennville by auto truck. The building is thoroughly modern in every respect, and the departments of manual training, home economics and business are well equipped. The school contains 17 class rooms.

The township library on the first floor of the building contains nearly 1700 volumes, besides reference works, supplementary books and magazines. This is in charge of three persons appointed by the judge of Jay County circuit court. A regular librarian who is a member of the Indiana State library board opens the library to the public every afternoon of the school week. A large gymnasium and basket-ball hall, built entirely by students under the direction of former Supt. O. B. Carmichael, stands a few rods south and west of the school. This building will seat 400 people.

Everything in Pennville centers about the school. Here are held all the teacher's meetings, entertainments, theatricals, debates and spelling bees, musicals, moving pictures, lectures, speeches, basket dinners and many other occasions intended to bring patrons, pupils and teachers together. There is an extensive playground with the school which in vacation is used for a picnic ground.

There have graduated from Pennville high school, since 1894, 273 students. Of this number, 146 have taught school, 216 attended business schools, normals or universities, 53 graduated from universities, 35 did post-graduate work, 9 are physicians, 5 are nurses, 28 moved away during high school senior year, graduating elsewhere. Of this number 20 attended colleges; 12 students are at present attending universities.

The class of 1906 was the banner university class. Pauline Place, DePauw, spent five years in Japan, taught in the Methodist girls' school at Naga Saki and graduated from the Tōkio

language school. She toured China in company with her sister Olive Place, vocal teacher in the Kwassui school. During the past summer Pauline Place delivered 59 addresses and lectures in as many Indiana cities in the interests of foreign missionary work. She went to Boston in February, 1922, where she will study for one year in the M. E. theological school. She then expects to return to Japan as teacher of languages. (2) Edgar Grisell, Indiana university, is in the insurance business at Indianapolis, Indiana. (3) Frank Sawyer, Clark college, is professor in that institution. (4) Susannah Gregg, Swarthmore, is a farmer's wife, Pennville. (5) Walter Lewis, Indiana university, is in the secret service, located at Indianapolis. (6) Theodore Davis, Purdue, is a Pennville farmer. (7) Almeda Mason, Marion normal, Earlham, is a farmer's wife, Pennville. (8) Fay Edmundson, The Western (Oxford, Ohio) University of Illinois, taught domestic science in Highland Park high school, and at Champaign, Illinois, was county agent at Kankakee, Illinois, now at Racine, Wisconsin. (9) Edgar Hiatt, Indiana university, Indiana medical, practiced in Portland, Ind., with Dr. Schwartz. Went with the 91st Division to France and Germany as surgeon. Is now located in the Provident hospital building in Pennville.

Pennville boys who have chosen the medical profession are: W. C. Horn, of Cincinnati medical college (retired); Trueman Boyd, of Twin Falls, Idaho; Roy De Weese, of Hartford City, Indiana (these three were not Pennville high school graduates); Walter Place, Indiana university, Indiana medical, now at Hartford City; Harvey W. Millery, Indiana university, now at Great Lakes naval training school; Howard Jones, Indiana university, Indiana medical, now at Salimonia; Lee Heller, Indiana university, Rush medical, now at Dunkirk; J. S. Hickman, University of Wisconsin, Rush medical, was physician for the Studebaker corporation, South Bend, with Dr. C. E. Caylor, of the Wells County hospital, now with the United States army (did not attend Pennville schools, but family resided here); Zell Walker, Indiana university, Indiana medical, now with the Methodist hospital corps of physicians; Harry Gray, Indiana university, Indiana medical, died in France; Harold Caylor, Indiana university, Rush medical, Mayo Bros.

hospital, Rochester, Minn., will locate in Bluffton; Trueman Caylor, Indiana university, Rush medical; Russel Horn, University of Michigan-Vet., at Fiatt, Ind.

A partial list of Pennville students who are now wide-awake citizens in various parts of the United States: (1) Charles Jones, Valparaiso, mayor of Sierra Madre, California. (2) Prof. Elmer Jones, Valparaiso, Earlham, Monmouth college, University of Colorado, Columbia university, Leipsig, was professor of phycology at Virginia State normal for 6 years; professor of philosophy at Indiana university for 6 years; director of the school of education of Northwestern for past 7 years; was sent by the United States government (in the interests of the M. E. Church) to the country of Albania to devise for that nation a system of higher education. He is the author of several scientific works and is a contributor to various research journals, and is now at Northwestern. (3) Lynn Grissell, Rose Polytechnic, West Point, now major in the United States army; was stationed in Arizona 2 years; Yellowstone Park, 2 years; in the Philippines, 4 years; at the Presidio, California, 2 years; now resides at Burlingame, California, and teaches military science in the San Francisco high schools. (4) Glade McClish, graduate of Angola and of Taylor university; is Methodist Episcopal missionary to Honan district, China, having charge of the Centenary food distribution station there. (5) Will Leamon (DePauw) was consulting chemist at Wooster, Ohio. Is the originator of the new method of producing gasoline from fuel oil. He now owns and operates a factory for this at Newark, Ohio. (6) Dwight "Tom" Leamon is in the United States navy, on board the battleship Mississippi at San Pedro. He has made four trips to South America. Plays the clarinet in the band. (7) Thomas Darrel Foster, Indiana university, has been a successful high school principal in several western states, at present with Monmouth, Illinois, high school, as teacher of higher mathematics, and coach of the football team. (8) Minnie Eberly, Terre Haute, Tri-State normal, Indiana university, Columbia university; now high school principal at Eaton, Pennsylvania. (9) Leslie Johnson, graduate of Tecumseh, Mich., high school, is now at Chicago art institute. Has become an illustrator of great ability. (10) Charles Gray, University of Michigan, Columbia university; now a successful real estate broker in

Chicago. (11) Lloyd Waltz, Indianapolis school of pharmacy; owns and operates his own drug store in Pennville, being the town's youngest business man. (12) Tom E. Miller, Irvington pharmacy college, owns and operates his own drug store in Bluffton. (13) Edward Harper, Purdue pharmacy, now manager of the Myers drug stores of Ft. Wayne. He served with the Expeditionary forces in France and Germany. (14) Celeste Bloxsome Northwestern is a member of the Chicago Mutual bureau and is reader and entertainer with the Ben-Hur singers and players. (15) Hattie Listenfelt, Indiana university, Columbia university, Chicago university, now successful high school teacher of English. (16) Mary Mason, Angola Normal, Earlham, Purdue, Indiana university, specialized in sciences, taught science in the Lincoln Memorial university, was government expert in the chemical and bacteriological department of the army camp at Ft. Sam Houston, Texas. Is now chemist in the pathological laboratory of Marion, Indiana, founded by Dr. Albert Davis—the only laboratory of this kind in Grant county. (17) Chester Teeter, Indiana university, naturalization examiner during the World war. Now successful lawyer in Ft. Wayne. (18) Whitney Smith, Indiana university, a successful lawyer of Los Angeles, Cal. (19) Dan De Witte, United States navy, has been around the world five times. (20) Chester Davis, Indiana university, joint representative from Randolph and Jay counties; one of the framers of the Indiana blue sky law, now attorney for State fire marshall, Indianapolis. (21) Fay Horn, Terre Haute normal, Indiana university, teacher at Sweetser; now teacher of Latin and Shakespeare in Central Normal, Danville, Ind. (22) Jessie Horn, graduate Presbyterian hospital, Chicago, post graduate Detroit, Methodist Episcopal hospital, Indianapolis, Protestant Deaconess, Indianapolis, Hahana-mon hospital, Chicago; now superintendent Ryburn hospital, Ottawa, Illinois. (23) Gene Starbuch, The Alfred Holbrook Normal, Lebanon, O., Indiana university, taught in Central Normal; was treasurer of Jay county for many years; now treasurer of the Haynes Automobile company, Kokomo.

This list omits many successful teachers and merchants, ranchers in Texas, oil-promoters of Texas, and Oklahoma, farmers in Idaho and Montana, and lumbermen in Washing-

ton and Oregon; also investors in Canada, and many prominent men and women of the Gulf states.

The town of Pennville is somewhat over a mile long, north and south, and three-quarters of a mile wide. The main street is the state highway (Richmond-Ft. Wayne) being cement paved through the town. South of Pennville, ten miles, is Redkey and Dunkirk twelve miles. It is twelve miles east to the county seat, Portland; eighteen miles north to Bluffton.

There are twelve miles of paved side-walks in the town, good business houses of block and of brick, electric lights, telephones, three garages, three gasoline fill-stations, 178 automobiles in and near the town, besides those of the garages and there are two daily jitneys to Portland and to Bluffton.

The population is near 850, at present. This has always been a farmer's town. The farm land in this locality is unusually fertile, and there is still a good yield of oil, and a moderate supply of gas. Out east of town are wonderful deposits of sand and gravel. All the farmers here raise pure bred stock; as a proof of their progressiveness hundreds of farm magazines arrive at the Pennville postoffice weekly.

The Grange is one of the largest and busiest in the state. Farmers' institutes are held each year, and are well attended, not only by farmers but by the citizens generally. The Grangers never miss an opportunity of displaying their products at the Jay county fair, and at those of neighboring counties, and especially the state fair.

A stranger once asked "Are all the citizens of Pennville Quakers?" The Methodist church has the largest congregation now and includes scores of families of Quaker origin. There is a Church of Christ which prides itself on its beautifully kept lawn and beds of flowers. There is the Friends church and the old Hicksite meeting-house which is seldom used.

All the Young People's societies and Women's auxiliaries are represented in these churches; and the Saturday night chicken suppers and basement banquets call together hundreds of people,—making Pennville a social center.

There is but one Catholic lady in the town, a college bred woman who has lived in various cities and she is authority for the statement: "I never lived in a place where people

worked so well together for the good of a town. The churches help one another. I meet with such generous treatment from everyone, no matter what church he or she claims." Mrs. A. C. Brown's estimate of the church life of the town may have some bearing on the educational welfare.

This is a lodge town. Besides the Grange, there are six large lodges, each one having a commodious hall. The social activities, in connection with these lodges, draw people within a radius of ten miles. And it is a town of many clubs. Besides the Latin club of high school, the sewing club and the Goodtime club, there are the H.O.D.S. and the En Avant clubs. None of these are federated.

The En Avant has been "doing something" for thirteen years. It is composed of 32 married ladies and the work done is literary and musical, with four social functions each year.

The H.O.D.S. (domestic science) was composed originally of young unmarried ladies; but now at the annual "home-coming" many states are represented and there are the merry faces of numerous children. The latest social event of the H.O.D.S. was the noon wedding of Miss Nila Edmundson, domestic science teacher, Manual Training school, Indianapolis, to Mr. Howard Ervin, merchant of Hartford City. This was the culmination of an Indiana university romance.

If a town may be judged by its private libraries, then this one need not fear the most critical inspection for Pennville citizens have taken much pride in the selection of books and home magazines. This Quaker habit of gleaning from the rarest and the finest flowers of literature, may account for the fact that Pennville youth, brought up in this careful way, thrived and expanded, a university course following as second nature.

A visitor to the town once said: "Never anywhere, have I heard of or seen so many relics and family heir-looms as are in Pennville." Its a veritable Old curiosity Shop. Here are pieces of furniture, coverlids, china, pewter, colonial cooking utensils, needle-work, pictures, rare books and documents, jewelry and souvenirs of many wars keepsakes from dozens of states. Money could not purchase these.

The drinking water is so cold and delicious that Old Immortal J. N. once told a lady here that he had come straight from Columbus, Ohio, to Pennville, "just to get a drink of

good water." There are yet a few of the old springs along the river bank and in the cellars and hill-sides. Once the community abounded in them, and there were frequently found bowers, or "spring-houses" over the springs, and a gourd dipper inviting the thirsty traveler.

There are many musicians here. The town enjoys an Epworth League lecture course, and a high school lecture course each year; also a summer chautauqua, street fair or fall carnival. There is a first class moving-picture house so that no one in this town need complain of dreariness.

The first oil well in the state of Indiana was drilled in Pennville, (often called Camden in those days.) Some of the weather-bleached timbers are still lying in the field southeast of town, marking the site. These are ghostly relics of that great phase in Indiana's history, the oil boom.

Pennville was along the renowned "Quaker Trace" of early Hoosier history. It was also in the underground railway district of pre-Civil war fame. The old Harris home, at Balbec, (Penn. township) once sheltered "Eliza" of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* renown. In the last 50 years Pennville has come to be known as the cradle of Methodism.

The vicinity's early history is intimately connected with that of the Godfrey Indians whose home was then in the 4000 acre reserve in the corner of Blackford and Jay. Those Indians sold their land and moved up near Fort Wayne. Two homes in Pennville are built of brick taken from the old Chief Godfrey's house. These are the last houses in the western part of town, before one takes the drive around the beautiful, shady, winding river road, one of the seven pikes leading out of Pennville.

Near the beginning of this same road is one of the curious wire foot bridges across the Salimonie which always interest visitors of the town. Ascent is made by steps into a tall tree where there is a platform, from which one reaches the narrow bridge, (swinging twenty feet above the river) and then crosses to the other side into a platform in another tree. It requires a level head to do the trick.

Close by this bridge, is the giant oak tree which marks the spot where a band of the Godfrey Indians camped by night, while exploring along the river for a reputed buried

treasure, coming back for this long after the tribe had moved away. This is the Godfrey oak much prized by the owner.

Following the river road westward, one comes to the old Reserve now for a great part in farm lands. It is worth a day's drive to explore this region. Other points of interest are, first: the Lupton pony farm on the angling pike to Hartford City, west of Pennville. This is the A. G. Lupton summer home on a farm of 400 acres, where live 350 ponies, Mexican burros, goats and black belted cattle. There are three tenant houses, an immense barn, hospital, blacksmith shops, race-track, corrals, etc. Mr. Lupton is a Pennville boy though his address is Hartford City, where he is a banker, and he delights in showing visitors through the grounds of his elegant home and in displaying the ponies and droll little burros.

East of Pennville are the three large, well kept cemeteries. These cemeteries are the especial care of the citizens. Still eastward is the 160 acres of pure gravel, the Margrette farm with its gravel pits (now small lagoons where the young folks go bathing in summer) and where the shade and the diversity of the ground make of it a natural park site. Still on, are the famous Twin Hills, once 200 feet above level; now nearly all converted into sand piles. This was once a great terminal moraine, and was the probable water shed between the Erie basin and the Ohio river valley. Here in a glacial formation, last summer, the workmen unearthed dozens of skeletons and parts of skeletons that may have been pre-historic men.

In this neighborhood are the spooky little gingseng farm in Hoover's grove and the great maple sugar camp of Mr. Walter Hartley one of the few such camps now in Indiana, and going north brings one to the old Spiritualist church, grove and burying-ground. This once had a large following and had state-wide reputation. This locality reminds one of some of Dicken's weird scenes in *Bleak House*. South of Pennville, on the Redkey pike, is the large Dunkard church in the midst of a prosperous Dunkard community. This church is a center for camp-meetings, Bible lectures, and many other interesting functions. The students from this church attend school at North Manchester and camp in summer at Winona Lake.

Pennville has a bird-man. This is the banker, H. H. Coffel, a home boy. His fine modern residence is enhanced by many artistic bird-houses and feed-stations. He also maintains a small bird park. Mr. Coffel lectures to school children all over the state on bird life, bird conservation, and our native trees. His lectures are illustrated with original slides. He has awakened much interest in this important subject among young people, and also adults; with the result that many homes in and around Pennville are proudly displaying bird houses. Mr. Coffel is a member of the executive board of the National Audubon society.

Mrs. Nellie Place Chandler, president of the women's Foreign Missionary society, M. E. church (the Richmond district) was a member of the General Conference at Des Moines Iowa. She is a musician of much ability and a composer of many Sunday school songs, hymns, cantatas, special day programs, choir music and many popular piano selections.

Aunt Mary (Shanks) McCoy is nearing the century mark. She is one of those rare, highly cultured Quaker dames, D.A.R.F.F.V. one of those pioneers who came out of Virginia to the Indiana wilderness in a covered wagon. She was connected with Indiana's old Liber college, and her life has been a shining example of modesty, truth and the love of learning. She is well known throughout Indiana. Her famous brother, General John P. C. Shanks, forms a chapter in Indiana Civil war history and was once a noted figure in Washington, D.C., and in Indianapolis. Died at Portland, Indiana.

Ralph Yountz, local baker, was for two and a half years in Alaska, in the service of the regular army. He is familiar with many existing conditions of that country, climatic, geographic, social and political. He had many experiences in Bering Sea and on the Pacific ocean.